

## Article 23

This article would discontinue and abandon an easement over a portion of Bethel Road and return control of this portion back to Temple Beth Elohim..

Temple Beth Elohim is in the process of planning for a new building to be built on the Temple's existing property at the end of Bethel Road. In connection with its new building plans, the Temple is asking the Town to discontinue and abandon a portion of an easement that was initially taken by the Town in 1961 so that the Temple can reconfigure its parking and access driveway to improve parking conditions and traffic circulation. In addition, the Temple has worked closely with Schofield School in a public-private collaboration so that the two neighboring institutions can share their parking spaces and pedestrian walkways in certain cases. This will also help alleviate some of the queuing on Cedar Street at certain times, and substantially reduce the need for walking out to Cedar Street to get from the Temple parking lot to Schofield and vice-versa. The portion of Bethel Road closer to Cedar Street will remain public, and the existing public frontage and access of the abutters will be preserved.

In connection with the discontinuance, the Temple will assume the responsibility of snow removal from all of Bethel Road. In addition, the Temple has agreed to make a number of improvements to the Schofield property to increase the number of parking spaces, to add new lighting and to provide a new connection between the two properties.

The Temple has met with the Police and Fire Departments, DPW, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Schofield PTO and the abutters to inform each interested party of the Temple's plans. The School Committee has voted unanimously to support the parking sharing arrangement, and the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to support the discontinuance. The two documents to memorialize this agreement are currently being negotiated and will be finalized subject to Town Meeting's approval.

Advisory believes this proposal was thoroughly vetted and that it provides a favorable outcome for the Town and the Temple. The new parking and traffic circulation should benefit both properties when each is at peak usage, which should mitigate some of the cueing that takes place on Cedar Street.

**Advisory recommends favorable action, 10-0.**